

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST
FACULTY SENATE
UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION COUNCIL

Minutes for the Meeting on April 24, 2023
12:15 – 1:30 p.m., Campus Center 804–808

- I. In attendance: Brent Auerbach, Carolyn Bassett, Elizabeth Connor, Justin Gross, Farshid Hajir, Claire Hamilton, Christiane Healey (chair), Benjamin Marlin, Alison Messier, Alice Nash, Nancy Noble, Gwyneth Rost, Caralyn Zehnder
- II. The minutes from the March 27 meeting were approved unanimously.

- III. The council opened discussion on how bursar holds impact student progress.

Warm welcome to Erin Schadel, UMass Amherst University Bursar, who was invited to provide an overview of holds and processes and to answer questions.

Summary of holds

Bursar holds are the most common type. The unpaid condition may originate in multiple ways, e.g., tuition, room and board, lost equipment, lab fees, and libraries. No matter the source(s), the hold is based on a single tuition bill not being paid.

Bursar holds are the only type that prevent student registration

Other common hold types: Parking, Health Insurance, Immunization

Timing of billing:

- Aug 10 – notification about paying before start of school year, along with suggestions for resolving it from Financial Aid. Students are billed again after add-drop. Students must settle fall bill between Oct 10 and start of class.
- While there is no disenrollment for nonpayment, subsequent registration is blocked.

Q & A between UEC and Erin Schadel on Bursar policies and statistics:

- *Bursar information shared during orientation?* It used to be, but no longer.
- *Is live chat available?* No, as it is too easily overwhelmed.
- *What other outreach is available?* The Bursar's office innovated the Isenberg student group, Smart about Money. There is also a very welcoming atmosphere in the bursar's office.
- *How many students are impacted by enrollment restrictions?* 5000-6000 holds per semester, but most settle by the registration deadline.
- *Who experiences the enrollment restrictions?* Bursar office is working these questions, looking at demographics in conjunction with UMass' PACE group.

According to Farshid, PACE is in its second year & currently developing its report on what populations are affected. As such, it may make sense to wait for PACE to report to UEC in the fall before UEC develops its response.

Further aspects of bursar hold policies impacting students

The UMass System prevents students from continuing from semester to semester if they have a balance of \$500 or more. For UMass Amherst campus, the amount is slightly more generous: \$1000.

Bursar expressed a belief that this policy, set by the trustees, is outdated. It is troublesome particularly for seniors who may miss enrollment for high-demand classes they need to graduate, but who may not have the funds until late in the summer to settle their bill. A possible solution is lowering the bursar hold threshold for seniors.

Erin's question to us: What would be helpful to students?

Suggestions:

- 1) Distributing a PowerPoint slide as outreach to share info and to emphasize the bursar office's welcoming environment
- 2) Offering workshops (partnering up with student success), perhaps with one targeted to parents of first-year students
- 3) Sharing dates of the type described above in "Timing of Billing", both via announcements and via a calendar on the bursar website

IV. Discussion of Undergraduate Curriculum Committee Annual Report

Following some minor corrections, the Annual Report was unanimously approved.

V. Discussion of UEC meetings for AY '24. All agreed to retain the same meeting format for AY '24, of having three meetings by Zoom followed by one in-person meeting in each semester.

Meeting adjourned 1:24 p.m.